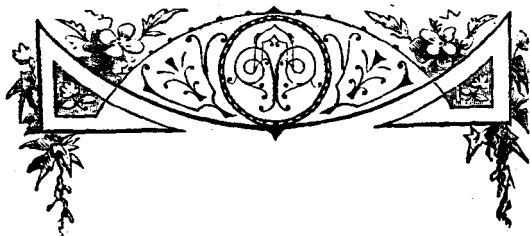


# *a community called ...*

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**“GIVE ME THINE HEART.”**

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AN early Christian writer states that Julitta, a pious lady possessed of wealth, was required, under the penalty of losing her property and life, to offer incense to idols. Hearing the impious decision, and supported by her Lord, she exclaimed, “Farewell, riches; welcome, poverty! Farewell, life; welcome, death! All that I have, were it a thousand times more, would I lose rather than speak one wicked word against God my Creator. I yield thee most hearty thanks, O my God! for

this gift of grace, that I can despise this frail and transitory world, esteeming the possession of Christ above all treasures." To any question after this, her answer was, "I am the servant of Jesus Christ." She welcomed a sentence that doomed her to the flames; and, when committed to them, her words and looks declared the joy that filled her heart.

The heart is required for God by the first and great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." Luke x, 27. This commandment is binding on all on earth and all in heaven. No intelligent being can be exempt from obligation to love his Creator; and no child of man, from the still weightier obligation, to love the divine Redeemer.

Think of the gift required. No lifeless forms or outward offerings merely--the wealth of the rich or the estates of the noble, the honors of philosophers or the crowns of kings. All these, if you could give them.

would, if offered alone, be mean and contemptible in the view of God. "Give me thine heart." The heart often signifies the affections. Give these to Christ, yield yourself to God, acknowledge his right to you. Say, "Lord, here take the purchase of thy death; I am forever thine. Thou didst die to ransom me from debasing servitude to sin and Satan, and from the horrors of eternal death. Now, take me, and all I am and all I have; for thou hast a right to all. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Thus present to God the sacrifice he loves, "a broken and a contrite heart;" a heart in which Christ may dwell.

By most this offering is withheld from God: by the open sinner—his heart is full of evil, and given to vanity; by the merely moral—he shuns the open vices of some, but gives not his heart to God; by the undecided—in them there may be much that has the semblance of piety, but here is their great want—the heart is not given to the Lord.

Like them are they who take up the profession of religion, but give not their hearts to Christ and hence the many inconsistencies that prove their religion to be vain.

Traveler to eternity, consider *for* whom and *by* whom this gift is demanded. The claim on thy heart is made for God, the infinite, the blessed, the high, the lofty One, whose love would bless, but whose frown would undo you forever. His favor is life; his anger is death, and worse than death. A dying sinner said, "O thou blasphemed yet most indulgent Lord God, hell itself is a refuge if it hide me from thy frown." Give him thy heart. It will not be to a feeble friend, for he is the Almighty God; not to a poor one, for all the wealth of heaven is his. He has blessed many that have made the offering; he can love, and save, and bless you. Him you must shortly meet, and appear as a disembodied spirit in his awful presence. (Eccles. xii, 7.) Would you be blessed? Then give now thy heart to God.

Present the offering to the Lord Jesus, who

appeared as "God manifest in the flesh." How many are his claims and excellences! He is the only Saviour.

Not only is this gift requested for him, but, stranger still, it is requested by him. He invites the offering when he bids all the heavy-laden come to him, and promises to give them rest. (Matt. xi, 27-29.) With condescension still more wonderful, the blessed God beseeches you to take him for your friend: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though *God did beseech* you by us; we pray you *in Christ's stead*, be ye reconciled to God." 2 Cor. v, 20. Amazing words of heavenly mercy! God, as it were, a suppliant to wretched, rebel man, entreating him to lay aside his enmity, to welcome salvation, and be blessed.

Undone immortal! God desires thy happiness when he says, "Give me thine heart." Vain, where eternity is concerned, is every thing short of the surrender of the heart to God. An accomplished young lady, supposed

to be pious, though she made no open profession of religion, was taken ill, and death seemed near. A minister visited her, expecting to find her possessed of hope and peace; but, to his surprise, he saw her countenance expressing agony of mind. "I am glad," said she, "you are come; I cannot bear to die a deceiver; but I am unable to tell the sad secret of my heart to those about me; it would be too much for them to bear. Ah, what have I to undergo? I am not religious; I have talked about religion; my passions have often felt the powers of the world to come; but, amid all, my own heart has never loved religion as a personal thing. Indeed, I have never concerned myself about it for myself, and now I must die without any of its prospects, and be forever shut out from any of its enjoyments. Is not this wretchedness?" The minister urged on her to confess her sins, and even then to seek mercy by believing in Christ, trusting wholly in him. "No, sir," she replied, "spare me, spare yourself; my

character is finished. What I am, that I shall be forever. The tree is even now falling. It is too late to direct the point to which its trunk shall be extended on the earth." Thus, full of despair, she died.

Reader, as you would avoid such wretchedness, give your heart to Christ. There is but the alternative before you of giving or refusing your heart to him. Give, and yield to the strongest claims of the blessed God and gracious Saviour. Refuse, and you trample on them all. Give, and you take the course which God, and Christ, and angels, and perfected saints, and dying Christians, and even dying sinners, approve. Refuse, and you take the course which pleases Satan and those who are led captive by him. Give, and obtain all spiritual blessings in Christ—pardon, peace, adoption, and blissful hope. Refuse, and you live and die accursed, without Christ, without hope. Give, and travel to heaven, and secure in Christ a mansion there. Refuse, and you spend a life of base rebellion and vile ingrati



tude toward a heavenly Friend, and of cruel madness toward your own soul. The matter comes to this point, you must give or refuse. No half-giving will avail. Indecision is refusal. Delay is refusal. Why should you delay? Is Satan so good a master that you should be loth to leave his service? Can you find a better friend than God? . Now pray, resolve, decide, ask the Holy Spirit's help, without which no one ever gave the heart to God. Fall on your knees before the mercy-seat, and vow to the Lord of all, "This heart is thine; O Lord, it shall be thine!"



PHILLIPS & HUNT, 805 Broadway, New York.

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